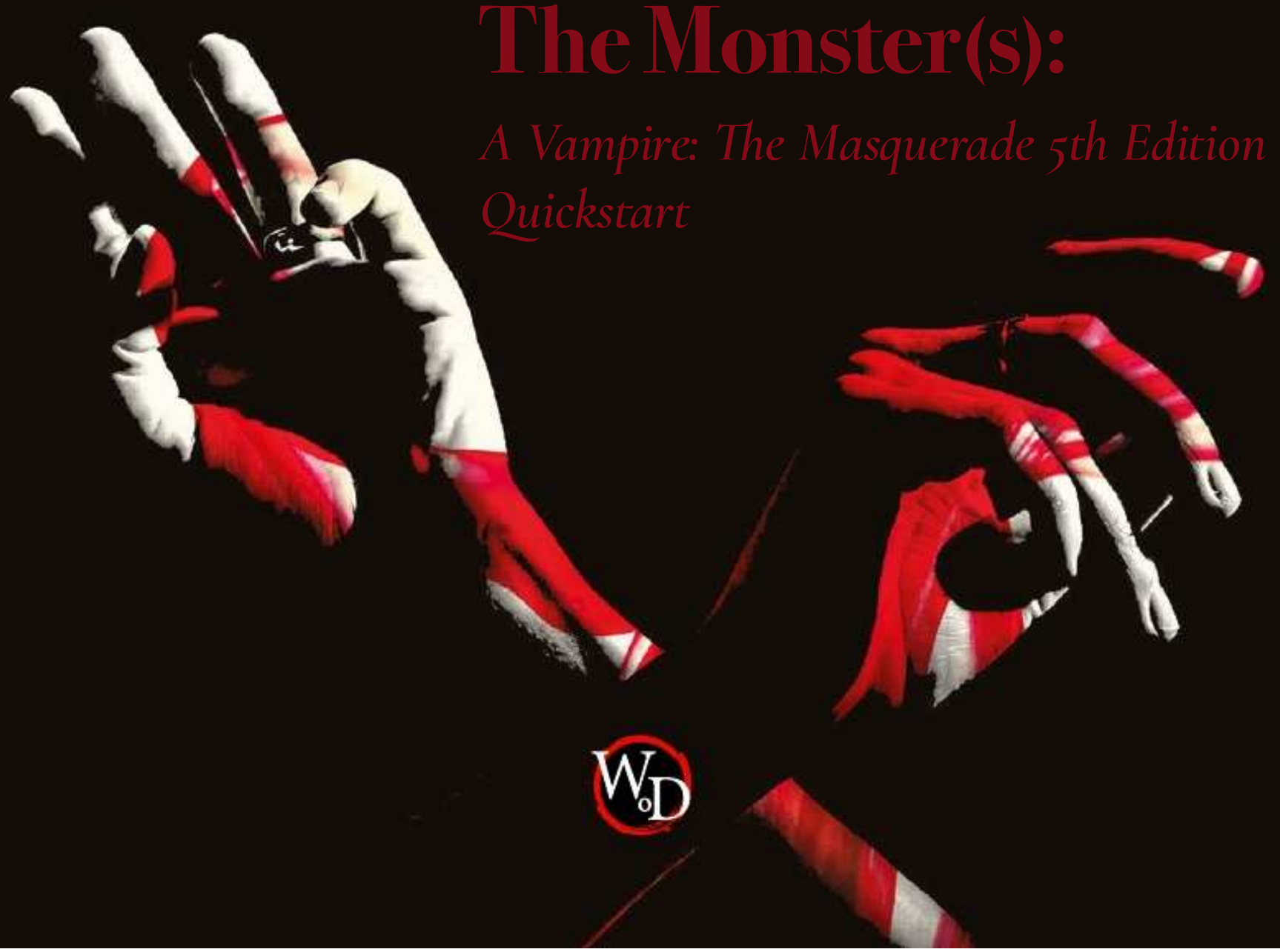
VAMPIRE

THE MASQUERADE

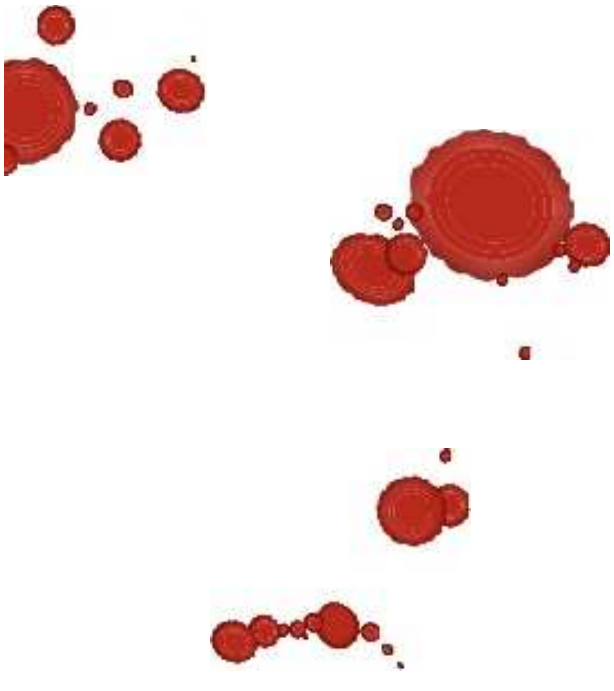
The Monster(s):

A Vampire: The Masquerade 5th Edition Quickstart



What is a Role-Playing Game?

A role-playing game (RPG) is a co-creation game in which players assume the roles of characters in a fictional setting. Players act out these roles within a story, both through literal acting and verbal description. A Story-teller ("Game Master" in many other games) is responsible for describing the world, playing all characters that are not player characters, presenting the plot, and helping the story progress.



In a small American town, someone is killing people and taking their blood, which is always a problem for vampires. If it is a human being, it might draw attention to the true predators of the night.

If it is Kindred[1], the Masquerade[2] is in jeopardy. If it is something else...

In this quickstart scenario of Vampire: the Masquerade fifth edition, you and a couple of friends will portray inhuman vampires doing their best to stay unliving in a world filled with peril. In this particular instance, they have been tasked to find a killer before the increased police and civilian scrutiny causes trouble for the vampires in the region.

What you will need:

- A copy of this document, preferably printed so you can refer to it during play and hand out physical copies of the characters and handouts.
- Five people, one of whom is acting as Storyteller (and who should be the only one reading all of this document).
- Pens and paper for taking notes.
- Several ten-sided dice in two colors.

NOTE: Vampire: the Masquerade is a mature game, dealing with serious and sometimes disturbing themes. Make sure that all participants are comfortable with this before playing the game. "The Monster(s)" contains explicit violence and murder, the taking of blood without consent, violations of personal integrity and references to sexual predation. Always remember that you are not your character, and that it is assumed that you are comfortable with exploring morality from a perspective that isn't your own. Also note that this isn't your typical "succeed or fail" RPG scenario - there are few happy endings.

The Storyteller should start by reading through the scenario at least once, so that he or she is familiar with the general outline. Present the characters to the players and distribute them as you as a group see fit. Give the players some time to read through the characters and ask any questions before you read the "Welcome to the World of Darkness" text below, which also starts off the scenario.

The rules of Vampire: the Masquerade that are relevant for this scenario are interspersed throughout, as well as in the character descriptions. Should the players go significantly "off book", feel free to use rules presented later in the document, or you as the Storyteller will have to improvise.

1 A term for vampires as a whole, or a single vampire

2 the habit (or Tradition) of hiding the existence of vampires from humanity. Designed to protect vampires from destruction at the hands of mankind, the Masquerade was adopted after the Inquisition claimed many Kindred unlives.

Welcome to the World of Darkness

Welcome to the World of Darkness. It is a world not unlike our own, seen through a darkened lens. As the unknowing humans sleep, monstrous vampires prowl, sustaining their undead existence with human blood. Over the years, these master predators have organised themselves in a neo-feudal structure, built on bonds of blood and favor.

In this scenario, you will be portraying four such vampires, forming a coterie (a tight-knit group of vampires) working at the behest of their undead masters to remove threats to the Masquerade.

As vampires, you can sustain damage far beyond what would kill a mortal, and have access to vampiric powers to bend as well as break those that oppose you. However, daytime is no longer yours, and sunlight burns your flesh. Human food or drink rapidly comes up again. But that pales in comparison with the Hunger: the only thing that sustains you is blood, and sooner or later, you always want more. Deny that urge and be prepared to face the consequences.

In this particular instance, your characters have been sent to hunt for a killer who might inadvertently draw attention to vampirekind. Sam Stokes, your master, is responsible for keeping a lid on things in your region, and has sent you to meet with her contact in the local police force for more details.

The hunt for the monster(s) is on."

ONLY THE STORYTELLER SHOULD READ BEYOND THIS POINT!

Introduction

"The Monster(s)" is an atypical murder mystery, in that the protagonists will not solve a "whodunnit?". Instead, they will be confronted by their own natures as they unravel the mystery behind the murders. It is semi-railroaded in that several scenes propel the plot forward without much player input (victim three and four) but it also has several open scenes, where the player characters are left to their own devices.

The main difficulty from a Storyteller point of view is foreshadowing the reveal in chapter three just enough, as well as managing the shift in mood that occurs over chapter two.

THEME, MOOD, RECURRING MOTIFS

The themes of "The Monster(s)" are Monsters we are - outlining in red ink that vampires are indeed monsters, who not only perform monstrous acts on an almost daily basis, but also eventually sink deeper still; and What should we do with monsters?. The mood should be rage and righteousness in the first acts as the players chase the monster, shifting into personal horror as it is revealed to the players what their characters have done. Recurring motifs are the mirror, as well as punishment for wicked deeds.

Setting the Scenario

The default setting for this scenario is a small American town, the particulars of which has been left purposefully vague, so as to allow placing it wherever you like.

The same goes for the various places and people encountered during the scenario: their descriptions are concise, and it is up to you as the Storyteller to add details and depth. Is Marcus Lector a traditional suit, or more of a big game hunter? Is Martha a shrunken old figure, or a perfectly ordinary woman? Are the locations encountered moody and atmospheric, or are you highlighting their banality? Do you give verbose and comprehensive descriptions, or do you let the players' imaginations do the job? The options are endless, and we cannot tell you which ones would give the best experience for you and your group.

Storyteller notes

Below are some additional notes for the Storyteller:

- If you didn't know already, you will quickly find out that players are inventive: they will go places neither you nor the scenario designer dreamed of. When that happens, you as a Storyteller will have to improvise. This applies particularly to inventive use of Disciplines - Juana could conceivably ask the animals anything, anywhere; Paul could use Premonition anywhere. Always give away something, but not too much.
- Where does the coterie sleep during the day? It is assumed that they live in a specially furbished mobile home, but they are of course free to make other arrangements if they wish.
- If the coterie knows what is best for them, they will do their utmost to stay off the radar of regular law enforcement. Webber's protection only goes so far, and all it takes is for the police to start looking for them to make the characters' unlives very difficult. Should someone encounter a mysterious mobile home in the area and decide to investigate during the day, it is likely game over. The same goes if the characters are hauled in for questioning or held in custody, since they don't suffer daylight gladly.
- The coterie is free to bring any reasonable equipment, Sam isn't stingy. But she is also adamant that it should hold up to an inspection by law enforcement.

Dramatis Personae

Here follows a brief description of the people involved in the drama. Besides these, the player characters are likely to interact with a number of different individuals, from potential witnesses to grieving families.

DETECTIVE ROBERT WEBBER, THE POLICE CONTACT

Turned by greed and Blood a long time ago, Detective Webber nowadays works for Mme Stokes (below), simply because he thinks vampires are better suited than cops to take care of any "funny business": his name for any case that shows traces of the supernatural.

In this case there aren't any such traces, but Webber nevertheless recognises the value of vampires staying hidden. As well as catching murderers, of course.

SAM STOKES, THE KINDRED SHERIFF

Madame Sam Stokes is the law among Kindred in these parts, and has been so for a long time. Once a fieldworker, nowadays a shotcaller behind the scenes, Sam's foremost job is protecting the Masquerade. She is the one that has sent the coterie to meet with Detective Webber, and is available to contact if the coterie runs out of ideas or needs strings pulled. (She also makes an appearance in the flashback in Chapter Three.)

HARRY LLOYD, THE OBSESSED FAN

One night three decades ago, a heavily intoxicated Harry Lloyd did something that has come to plague him his entire life. He had long been obsessed with sci-fi movie mega starlet Eliza Burton, a young actress of considerable fan acclaim. A toxic fan, he took his fixation too far, frequently visiting Eliza's house without her knowledge and tracing her every movement. This fateful night, after drinking a little too much, Harry broke into Eliza's home, and when she told him to leave, he lashed out. He murdered her. Or that's what the papers and the judge said. Harry maintained his innocence — of the murder, at least — and still does to this day.

He was released from prison a few months ago and was hopeful his crime would have been forgotten. The tabloids ensured this would not be the case, clickbait articles and thinkpiece vlogs creating an Eliza Burton renaissance while portraying Lloyd as a wretched obsessive fan.

He now lives a miserable existence in his house, ostracized by the community, from which he is often the subject of harassment and vandalism. He would have moved long ago if he had the means.

The coterie might encounter Harry already in chapter one, but he otherwise shows up in chapter two.

MARCUS LECTOR, THE CLOT COLLECTOR

Marcus Lector is a vampire of means, and spends his time collecting victims with rare and delicate blood that sometimes even yields supernatural effects. He especially savors the blood of serial killers and other remorseless ne'er-do-wells, and is thus on a similar mission as the coterie.

Including Marcus in the scenario is optional, serving as foil and/or opportunity, depending on the coterie's actions.

THE MONSTER

Ever since that fateful night thirty years ago poor Martha has been trying to piece together what happened to her younger sister. They say it was a serial killer, but some things don't add up. There are details missing, things subdued. Piece by piece, she has reconstructed that night at the hotel and what followed, and a whole world of darkness and pain has been revealed to her. This has caused her mind to irrevocably snap, and out of pain and vengeance she is now looking to recreate the events of thirty years ago in her own, twisted way, before her health gives out.

THE COTERIE

See the appendix for descriptions of the player characters. As with the other descriptions in the book, there is little in the way of physical description here, leaving it to the players to imagine what their characters are like. Some parts of the character sheet relate to systems not in this quickstart - ignore those for now.

Chapter 1 – Hook and introduction

"Nobody owns life, but anyone who can pick up a frying pan owns death."
— William S. Burroughs

Chapter one is the introduction of the scenario, and will give the players plenty of leeway when it comes to actions. Hopefully they will have seen a cop show or two, so as not to be completely lost at how to investigate a murder.

Rules in this chapter:

The rules you will be using in this chapter are *basic rolls, willpower and hunger*.

Basic rolls

Basic rolls are simple - whenever a character wants to accomplish something that is difficult and the outcome is uncertain, add one character attribute (Strength, Composure, etc) to one character skill[3] (Drive, Larceny, etc.), roll that many dice and count all that come up 6 or more: this is the number of successes. If the number of successes equals or exceeds the Difficulty of the task (set by the Storyteller) the character succeeds.

Example: Aileen wishes to distract the attendant so that the rest of the coterie can sneak into the morgue. Aileen's player rolls six dice (three dice for Aileens Manipulation of 3, and three more for her Subterfuge of 3). The dice come up '6, 3, 5, 7, 7, 8' giving Aileen a total of four successes. Given that the Storyteller earlier set the Difficulty at 3 (a common Difficulty for challenging situations), Aileen succeeds and the attendant is properly distracted.

Criticals

Whenever you make a roll and get two or more tens ('0' on many ten-sided dice), you have scored a critical, and get two extra successes!

Willpower

Players who are unsatisfied with their rolls may spend a point of their character's Willpower - a measure of mental fortitude - to re-roll up to three non-hunger dice. Note that this may negate messy criticals and bestial failures (see below). To spend a point of Willpower, simply check one Willpower box. There is no way to regain willpower in this quickstart; what you get you need to make last until the end of the scenario.

Hunger

Hunger is the eternal curse of all vampires, driving them to hunt for blood to satisfy their bestial urges. As the hunger of a vampire increases, these urges will eventually drive it to inhuman actions. Keep track of each player character's hunger level with off-color ten sided dice (one dice per level of hunger). It ranges from zero (satisfied) to five (ravenous). All players begin with a hunger level of one. Whenever you make a roll, substitute as many dice for hunger dice as your level of hunger.

Example: Charles has a hunger level of three, and his player has therefore placed three off-colour dice on the character sheet. When it is time to roll for a task with five dice, Charles' player substitutes three of those dice for Charles' hunger dice.

Messy criticals

Whenever you score a critical and at least one '10' ('0') comes from a hunger dice, the character's vampiric nature (also known as "The Beast") makes itself known. You get two extra successes, but perform the action as a vampire would: killing someone you were trying to subdue, flashing fangs at someone you were trying to intimidate, feeding from someone you met when canvassing, etc.

Example: when perusing the archives to find out if there have been any similar murders in the past, Paul's player rolls two tens, one of which is on a hunger die. Engrossing himself in the archives, Paul uncovers plenty of information, but when the archivist checks up on him, Paul's annoyance at being interrupted results in him breaking the archivist's arm.

3 Sometimes e.g. a Discipline rating is substituted for a skil, and on some occasions two attributes are rolled

If you fail to come up with something appropriate the roll just fails instead, as the Beast clouds the vampire's actions.

Bestial failure

If you fail your roll and at least one hunger die shows a '1', the Hunger interferes with your action and the Beast manifests. You cause some kind of problem for you (and probably the coterie), just like with a messy critical, while also failing spectacularly.

If you fail to come up with something appropriate, stress increases your Hunger by one instead.

Rouse checks and using the Blood

Hunger increases whenever a player fails a Rouse check, and decreases when the vampire feeds. Rouse checks are made whenever the vampire uses its Blood, and every evening when it rises from sleep. To make a Rouse check, simply roll one die, and if isn't a success, the vampire's Hunger increases by one.

Vampires can use the Blood to get an extra die on any roll, and to power their inhuman abilities, called Disciplines (each player character's Disciplines are described on their character sheet).

Example: Paul wants a little extra on a roll to escape some hunters, and uses the Blood to get an extra die. After the roll, regardless of success or failure rate, the player rolls a single die and increases Paul's hunger by one if it shows 1-5.

Example: Juana wishes to use Feral Whispers (see Juana's description in the appendix) to ask the rats in an area to warn the coterie if someone approaches. Feral Whispers has a cost of one Rouse check, so Juana's player rolls a single die and increases Juana's hunger by one if it shows 1-5.

If Hunger is already at 5, the vampire can no longer take voluntary Rouse checks.

No matter the result of the Rouse check, the desired effect (using a Discipline power, mending damage or adding the extra die) always triggers. The Rouse check only determines if Hunger increases as a result. If it does, add the Hunger dice after the effect resolves.

Feeding

Drinking blood reduces a vampire's Hunger level by a fixed amount. Draining a human of blood, thereby killing them, is the only way to reduce Hunger to 0. It takes time and care to drink blood properly. The bite of a vampire is euphoric to the victim, due to vampire fangs having a supernatural intoxicating effect as they pierce the blood vessel. If the vampire takes the time to hit a vein or artery correctly and licks the wound closed afterward, the victim may only remember the encounter as a hazy drug trip, an interlude of weird sex, or a delirious fog of drunken intimacy.

As a general rule, attempting while feeding to preserve the victim's life, health, and ignorance (all of which of course also preserve the Masquerade) takes longer than simply ripping open an artery and slurping down the red stuff. On the other hand, a victim who fights back slows things down and endangers the Masquerade. A vampire can drain and kill a helpless or otherwise unresisting human in roughly five turns.

For the purposes of this quickstart, taking a non-lethal sip from a human reduces Hunger by one or two, completely draining a human reduces it by five, including the last Hunger dice. Draining several animals may also reduce Hunger by one.

Scene One: Meeting the Contact

This scene throws the characters straight in, and serves as an introduction to the scenario. The players should leave it with a basic outline of what has happened and some idea of what to do next.

Begin the scene by asking the players where they want to set up the meeting with their contact, and set the scene there. Depending on your players this could be a parking lot, a local dive, a deserted stretch of road, or whatever else occurs to the players. After setting the scene, ask each player in turn for a physical description of their character.

Detective Robert Webber arrives on time, and is more nervous about meeting what he knows to be the undead than he is about the clandestine nature of the meeting. He gives the player characters an outline of the victims and what the police knows (which is not a lot since he has stalled the investigation on purpose to give the player characters time to take care of business), and is then available for questions. He also gives the coterie a number where they can reach him if they need anything.

The victims

Two victims have been found so far, and the state of the bodies leave no doubt that the murders are connected. Both bodies now reside in the local morgue, awaiting processing.

Simon Drummer, college jock

Victim number one, Simon Drummer, was found four days ago, tucked away in a storm drain. Unfortunately, recent rains have made a mess of the crime scene.

Simon was a strapping young lad in his early twenties, attending college in another state but home over a hiatus in his studies. He gives the impression of being an "all-American young man" and often poses with the football sweater of his team.

Carl Thrush, basement cooker

Victim number two, Carl Thrush, was found two days ago in a copse of trees, splayed on a rock and emptied of blood, which is why Webber immediately contacted Sam. The site has since been cleared but little else of note was found.

Carl was a man in his mid-thirties, who still lived in his parents' basement and had no registered place of work. Despite the popular images of such individuals he was quite a looker. A roll of Intelligence + Finance (Difficulty 3) reveals that he was living larger than he should be able to afford, even if supported financially by his parents.

Proceed to scene two as soon as the coterie has asked their questions and are prepared to move on with their investigation.

Scene Two: Nightly Investigations

This is an open-ended scene where the player characters are free to investigate the murders as they see fit, and should be fertile ground for skill tests. Proceed to the next scene when the players have run out of ideas and/or when play loses steam.

Give the player characters a moment to discuss their approach and decide who will do what. It's up to them if they wish to proceed as a group or split up to cover more ground. If the latter, balance the scenes so that each team has roughly the same amount of time in the spotlight. Ask each player in turn what they want their character to do during the first night. Below are some examples of leads they might want to pursue, but be prepared to improvise as well if the players come up with something unexpected.

The morgue

The bodies of the victims are still in the county morgue, awaiting processing. At night, a single attendant is there, burning the midnight oil. The characters

can gain access by breaking in with a roll of Wits + Larceny (Difficulty 3), bribing the attendant with a roll of Manipulation + Persuasion (Difficulty 3), or impersonating law enforcement with Manipulation + Subterfuge (Difficulty 4). It is also possible to simply call Sam or Webber and ask them to pull strings.

If the characters gain access they can examine the bodies themselves using Intelligence + Medicine. If several characters are present, only the one with the highest dice pool rolls, and adds one die for each other character present with at least one dot in Medicine. If they subverted the attendant, the characters will be provided some basic information.

("CSI-stuff" is certainly possible, but will take weeks)

SUCCESSES	INFORMATION (YOU GET EVERYTHING ON AND BELOW YOUR LEVEL OF SUCCESS)
0	They're bodies. They have been subjected to significant violence. Best not look too closely.
1	Both bodies have been savaged with at least a slashing weapon of some sort.
2	Care has been taken to slash major arteries, and there is much less blood present in the bodies than there should be. In both cases there are significant head traumas from blunt objects as well.
3	The attacker seems an odd mix of competent and furious. There are no fang marks anywhere on the bodies, but given the Kindred's ability to close fang marks with saliva, this doesn't rule out a vampire assailant.
4	There is little subterfuge here: the murderer seems to have acted out of rage, and given that crimes of passion usually involve people with knowledge of one another these were probably not random victims.
5+	The victims were likely incapacitated by the blow to the head, and only later slashed. There seems to be no pre-mortem damage, which clashes somewhat with the rage theory.

The murder scenes

Unfortunately, there is very little at the two murder scenes. Some blood from the victim can be found on the second scene if one really looks, but this says nothing the coterie doesn't already know.

NOTE: Juana can talk to the animals at the two scenes, and they confirm that someone did indeed kill someone here. There was also a lot of blood.

The police precinct

Going to see the police is unwise. The characters likely have no credible alibis, and little reason to be in the area. Drawing attention to themselves from the authorities is a bad idea (see "Dealing with law enforcement"). There is also nothing the police can tell the coterie that Detective Webber can't. Should the coterie go there against better judgement, Webber will call them shortly thereafter to berate them.

The families

Interviewing the families of the victims under whatever pretext is a straightforward task, and they are a little confused that the police haven't done so already. Unless approached early in the night, they will be asleep when the characters arrive.

Simon Drummer's family is very forthcoming, and best interviewed with a Charisma + Persuasion roll.

SUCCESSES	INFORMATION (YOU GET EVERYTHING BELOW YOUR LEVEL OF SUCCESS AS WELL)
0	The coterie gets nothing but polite pleasantries.
1	Simon had no enemies and was well-liked by everyone.
2	All that slander about him is blatantly false, and will not be repeated.
3	Several girlfriends have claimed Simon had been "less than a perfect gentleman" with them.
4	Simon was a good kid, really, it was just that sometimes they made him so angry, you know?
5+	Simon once confessed he felt pressured to live up to expectations, and thus "could get a little rough with girls, because that's what they like, and what is demanded of him by the other guys". His parents made him apologize to every one of his former girlfriends when they discovered this.

Carl Thrush's family is less forthcoming, and wants nothing to do with the coterie, even should they claim to be police. They can be forced to talk with Charisma + Intimidation, if the coterie is okay with bullying information out of a traumatized family.

SUCCESSES	INFORMATION (YOU GET EVERYTHING ON LOWER LEVELS)
0	*"Whoever you are, fuck off!"*
1	Carl claimed to have plenty of enemies: people who wished him ill and often assaulted him. The parents have never seen these people.
2	Carl was a successful businessman, and paid for room and board at his parents' place.
3	Carl instructed his parents to "get rid of all his stuff if something happened" so the parents burnt it all. He'd had a lot of chemistry equipment, a computer and bundles of unsent packages.
4	Carl's business involved a lot of chemistry, strange smells, and lots of packages going out. He had all contacts on his computer.
5+	Carl was deeply paranoid, and lately complained that someone was stalking him "AFK", whatever that means.

Asking around

Canvassing the neighborhood is done with Resolve + Investigation or Streetwise, and the result varies with what the characters are asking about. Allow anyone who spends significant time asking around to roll, and "purchase" appropriate clues for the players (they don't automatically get everything on lower levels).

SUCCESSES	INFORMATION TIDBITS
0	*You get nothing!*
1	• Suspicious people have been sneaking about lately (dubious). • The police around here are irreparably corrupt (true, as the characters should know). • Simon's trollops like it rough, everyone knows that (not true). • Carl is a basement creep who deserved what he got (not true).

2	• The folks around here are pious and righteous (dubious). • A lot of people around here are suspicious of authority, and like to take matters into their own hands (true). • The postmaster always carries a heavy load to and from Carl's place. • Large packages go in, small packages come out (true).
3	• Harry Lloyd is a known stalker and murderer who served his time. He lives around here, and people have given him the what-for many times, but he is protected by the police (true). • People here are suspicious and superstitious, prone to vicious gossip and mob mentality (true). • "There are monsters out there. They need to be hunted down without mercy." (true, but not in the way they think).
4	• A suit and his goons have been poking around lately. They drive two fancy cars and look dangerous (true, this is Marcus Lector, see below). • There are generally no homeless people around here (not true), but people claim to have seen a vagrant several times at night (true, this is the victim in scene three). • People in this region take an active stance when it comes to making sure the community is safe from monsters, and the authorities turn a blind eye, if they even know (true).
5+	• Simon has severely beaten several girls from school over the years (true). • Carl was the "crack king" of the county and sold to everyone, including minors (true). • The fancy suit is staying at a fancy motel off the '56 (true, this is where Marcus Lector sleeps during the day).

Hitting the books

- Searching the archives for similar crimes in the area yields nothing unless the character scores four or more successes on a Resolve + Investigation roll. In this case they discover that something did happen in a neighboring region thirty years ago, but this has been carefully expunged from all records (See Chapter Three - the characters are chasing their own tail here).
- Looking for possible suspects also uses Resolve + Investigation, and reveals the existence and address of Harry Lloyd with three successes.
- Seeking the history of the region gives nothing substantial.

Encounter: Harry Lloyd

If the players uncover Harry Lloyds existence, they might decide to pay him a visit (otherwise he features heavily in the next chapter). If they ask Webber about it he says that he doesn't keep track of "every ex-con who committed a crime back when Reagan was president".

Harry has nothing to offer except to stress his innocence, and with a Wits + Insight (Difficulty 3) one gets the impression that he is telling the truth. Intimidation yields nothing but a sobbing wretch of a man who begs for mercy.

Encounter: Marcus Lector

At some point the players should be contacted by one of Marcus' goons, who says his boss wants to meet. It is also possible that the coterie goes out to confront Marcus after having heard the talk on the town; regardless the scene plays out the same. The goon will reveal that Marcus is "of the Blood" and an "interested party", nothing more. If the coterie refuses, Marcus will instead seek them out, and be significantly less polite. He can also contact the coterie through Sam, if necessary. If asked, Sam is cautious when it comes to Marcus and offers no advice.

Marcus knows of the coterie's mission through the grapevine, and has a proposition for them, which he makes after small talk at the motel where he stays. A Wits + Awareness roll (Difficulty 4) reveals that Marcus' goons are significantly armed, and equipped with

tasers. They have also brought a disguised ambulance and restraints. Marcus collects Dyscracias or "Clots": rare formations of human blood that have mystical properties. He claims that the Clots of serial killers are the best, as they "take away all the guilt, all the anguish" from "that most pleasurable activity". If the coterie finds the murderer, Marcus wants him or her, alive, and is offering the coterie a major Boon[4] as payment. Should they find but not give him the murderer, he will be "most displeased", but does not elaborate.

Scene Three: The third victim

Scene Three begins when Detective Webber calls the coterie to inform them that there has been a third murder, and this time the players can be first on the scene. This is likely to occur in the beginning of the second or third night, depending on how long the players have been investigating. However, at the end of the night also works, as this will make the beginning of the next chapter a race against the sun as well.

Webber directs them to a long-abandoned apartment building a ways away from the town proper, and asks that the characters contact him with instructions when they are done at the scene (he expects to be told to either clean it up, call it in or do nothing). He will not join them.

On the third floor there is an obvious squat, where someone has been living for quite some time. There is rudimentary scavenged furniture, bedding, and drug paraphernalia. In one of the rooms lies the corpse of a vagrant, similarly savaged as the earlier victims, but visibly less so. As usual, ask each player in turn what they want to do in the scene.

Investigating the corpse

The victim has not been drained of blood, evident from the fact that she lies in a huge pool of it. The youthful face is untouched, and Composure + Investigation (Difficulty 2) reveals that there is significantly less slashing than on the previous victims, as if the murderer suddenly stopped. Three successes reveals that the cuts seem more methodical.

4 A favour in Kindred parlance. A major Boon from someone as powerful as Marcus is a significant gain for the coterie, who otherwise stands to gain only the lack of displeasure from their master for a job well done.

Investigating the squat

Looking through the vagrant's modest belongings reveals nothing except that she was a drug user, poor, and probably miserable. Three successes on a Composure + Investigation roll reveals unsent letters tucked away, where the writer begs to be taken back by her family.

Investigating the house

The house is largely empty, but a Wits + Awareness (Difficulty 3) roll reveals a second squat behind some loose boards. This looks more temporary, with a decent sleeping bag, stove and MRE:s. It also contains a small box with locks of hair (trophies from Simon and Carl, but this might not be directly evident). The room is not sunproofed, and tape and blu tac remnants on the walls suggest something was torn down in a hurry.

The murderer has stayed here for a period of time, and if they understand this, the findings should convince the coterie that the murderer isn't a vampire.

Tracking the murderer

Summoning e.g. a dog and tracking the murderer is a brilliant idea, and leads the coterie to the room described above. Have the character roll only for the use of the Discipline, and don't make a separate roll for tracking. Before the coterie can track the murderer in the opposite direction, the dog bays, and Chapter Two begins.

Keeping watch/idling

Even if no character purposely keeps watch (as they have little incentive to do so) allow any character who idles or merely assists another character a Wits + Awareness roll (Difficulty 3) to notice several shapes moving in the darkness outside the building. Proceed to Act Two.

NOTE: Roll for any watching/idling characters last, as their action effectively moves play to the next act.

After each character has had the chance to do something, proceed to Chapter Two.

Chapter 2 – Divergence

"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. a burn for a burn. a life for a life. that's how all this got started. and that's how it's going to end."

— Jenny Han, Fire with Fire

In this chapter the heat is turned up, quite literally, and the scenario shifts from low-key investigation to more frantic action. After the build-up of the first chapter it should also highlight and bring to the fore the theme of the scenario.

Rules in this Chapter

The rules you will be using in this chapter are *basic (physical) conflict* and *damage*.

Basic conflict

Conflict happens in a flurry of blows, rhetorical or physical. When each participant in the conflict has acted once, or declined to act, that defines a turn. Turns take as much time as the narrative indicates they should. Thus, one roll does not necessarily represent one swing of a baseball bat, unless the Storyteller says it does.

At the start of every turn of the conflict, each player declares their intent, i.e. what they are trying to achieve. In a physical conflict this can be anything from trying to tackle the driver of an escaping motorcycle to simply taking cover.

Example: Going left to right around the table, the Storyteller asks the players to describe their intended actions. Paul wants to dive for cover, Aileen shoots, and Charles desperately tries to fend off an attacker without killing it. Once all players have decided on their courses of action, the Storyteller makes the same decisions for all SPC:s and tells the troupe which dice pools to build. The players then roll to attempt it.

Example: No one attacks Paul, Aileen is charged by her target, and Charles' attacker keeps attacking.

Conflict Pools

The dice pool each participant uses in a conflict turn is called their conflict pool. In a physical fight, the conflict pool might for example be Strength + Brawl or Composure + Firearms. Characters sometimes change pools during a conflict, for instance if they change weapons.

Example: Aileen rolls Composure + Firearms against the target's Dexterity + Athletics, two dice deducted from the target's pool since he breaks cover to charge, while Charles engages in a Strength + Brawl vs Dexterity + Melee contest with his opponent. If alive, Aileen's attacker rolls Strength + Brawl vs Aileen's Dexterity + Athletics. The Storyteller tells Paul that he finds cover without needing to roll, since he was not attacked this turn.

Both the attacker and defender roll their pools simultaneously in a basic conflict. The side that scores the most successes wins their turn of that conflict. The winner subtracts the loser's successes from their total and applies the remainder as damage (see below).

If the conflict is one-sided, such as when the defender is trying to avoid getting shot, only the attacker can inflict damage. If both participants are able to cause harm to their opponent, the conflict is two-sided, with both sides counting as attackers. In this case, the actions of both parties are merged into a single conflict roll. A tie results in both parties inflicting one point of damage on the other (remember to add weapon damage if applicable, see below).

Ranged weapons

Ranged combat is resolved as a contest, usually vs the defender's Dexterity + Athletics. In cases where two combatants are attacking each other at range, you can resolve it as a two-sided Firearms conflict (see above). This assumes that the subjects have access to limited cover, such as a car or the corner of a building. A character with no available cover subtracts two dice from their defense pool.

Dodging

When engaged in a Brawl or Melee conflict, the defender can always opt to use their Dexterity + Athletics instead of a combat skill to defend. If they do, they inflict no damage on the opponent, no matter the margin, if they win.

Multiple opponents

In a conflict where teaming up makes sense, a character facing multiple opponents loses one die from their defence pool for each successive opponent that targets them. In order to attack multiple foes as a single action, a character must split their attack dice pool.

Damage

In a physical conflict, damage targets Health. The winner of each contest applies their success margin to the loser's relevant tracker as damage. Sometimes, circumstances mandate extra damage after the contest:

- If the winner used a weapon, they add the relevant weapon's damage rating to the total damage (for the purposes of this quickstart, the storyteller assigns weapon damage - a knife might be +1, a rifle +3).

Example: Firing her pistol, Aileen gets two more successes than the opponent. Adding the pistol's weapon rating of +2, the target suffers 4 points of damage.

Types of damage

In the Storyteller System, damage comes in two types:

- Superficial damage: bruises, sprains, grazes, and the like but not immediately life-threatening injury. Fists, kicks, and non-lethal weapons, such as tasers, do Superficial damage to humans. Standard weapons, such as hand guns and blades, do Superficial damage to vampires.

- Aggravated damage: broken bones, wounds, and life-threatening injuries. Sharp and piercing weapons do Aggravated damage to humans. Fire, sunlight, and the claws and teeth of some supernatural creatures do Aggravated damage to vampires.

Tracking damage

Characters apply their damage to the Health track. **Unless otherwise stated, divide Superficial damage in half (rounded up) before applying it to the tracker.** Mark each level of Superficial damage on the character sheet by making a "/" in one box on the tracker. Mark Aggravated damage on the character sheet by making an "X" on the tracker.

Impairment

Once the character sustains enough damage of either type, or a mix, to fill their tracker, they are Impaired. Impaired characters lose two dice from all relevant dice pools: Physical pools and any other pools the Storyteller believe to be similarly weakened.

At the Storyteller's discretion, mortals are incapacitated at this stage. For every level of damage of either kind, Superficial or Aggravated, a character takes while Impaired, convert one previously sustained Superficial damage to Aggravated damage on a one-for-one basis. Turn the "/" to a "X" on the track. Remember to halve Superficial damage as usual before converting it.

The end of the tracker

A character with their tracker completely filled with Aggravated damage is out of the conflict, possibly permanently. In a physical combat, they are comatose or dead (if mortal), or fall into torpor (if a vampire; in this quickstart this effectively takes the character out of the scenario).

Healing Damage

Vampires can heal one Superficial damage level per turn by making a Rouse check.

Scene One: In our midst!

This scene is a pure action scene, with the players trying to escape from a posse of "monster hunters", who think they are hunting a serial killer, and believe most human evil to be of supernatural origin. What complicates matters is the fact that simply killing the attackers probably isn't compatible with keeping a low profile and preserving the Masquerade. Note that it is quite possible that this scene ends quickly, if the characters bolt first thing; especially if they spot the hunters early.

Unbeknownst to the coterie, another party has been frantically searching for the killer, but have up to this point been confined to psyching themselves up in a garage. This night, the murderer was spotted and the posse springs into action. Unfortunately for them, they are no smooth operators, and by the time they get there, the coterie is there instead.

If the coterie spotted the posse in the previous chapter, give them a minute or so to react before the hunters reach them. If not, the hunters storm them right on, having already seen them.

Just like before, and as described in the rules above, ask each player what their characters do, and then perform roughly three turns of combat, during which smart players will likely try to escape. If things are still not concluded, add one or two extra turns, assuming the action is entertaining. After that, if the coterie is still trying to escape, let them escape, and if they are holding out against the posse, the posse retreats.

The Posse

You as Storyteller will have to determine the size of the posse depending on the difficulty level you want, but roughly six or so combatants is a good number. Nevermind individual stats for the posse members, instead use a fixed number of dice for all their rolls. If you as a Storyteller want to roll less dice, you can also just assign the opposing NPC:s half their pool (rounded up) in successes, and let only the players roll dice.

Roughly half of the posse are war veterans, have six dice in their pools and are armed with AR-15:s (+1 dice to the attack pool; damage +3) or shotguns (damage +4). They have six boxes in their health tracker. The rest have four dice, are armed with baseball bats, golf clubs and similar weapons (damage +2), and have five boxes in their health trackers. If you really want to spice things up, have one or two armed with molotov cocktails[5] (damage +0, but aggravated versus vampires).

What if the coterie massacres the posse? Well, if they hide the bodies and no-one lives to tell, nothing happens before the end of the scenario. However, this amount of missing people will sooner or later cause a stir, and the coterie is, possibly quite literally, cooked when it reaches Sam's ears. If they kill only some of the posse and the rest escape, the manhunt is quickly on as the posse members spin their tales. Sam will have no option but to pull the characters out.

The Storyteller should be merciless when it comes to the consequences of solving one's problems with naked violence and wholesale butchery.

If the scene took place early in the night, start the next scene as soon as the players have had an hour or so to catch their breath. If it took place late in the night, the next scene starts as soon as the players wake up the next evening.

5 It's not like they know they're fighting vampires, but hey - fire works against many things, especially if you want to see them burn.

Scene Two: Scapegoat

Depending on the timing, this scene takes part either early or late in the night. It is open-ended, and requires the players to make some hard choices. It begins when Detective Webber calls with an emerging opportunity. The third victim has sprung the community into action, and they already named their monster: Harry Lloyd. They are now on their way to mete out some mob "justice". Webber thinks this is excellent and suggests that the murders be pinned on Harry. All the coterie needs to do is make sure Harry doesn't survive his encounter with the crowd; dead men get no counsel and present no alibis, and it will be easy for Webber to wrap everything up later.

Give the coterie a moment to discuss the idea and what to do. Ideally, the coterie should have a thing or two to say on the morals of the situation. If they decide to do nothing, have Sam call them and give them a piece of her mind: this time, it isn't optional. If they still decide to do nothing, Harry is placed in a coma by the mob, and they will be in trouble with Sam later; disobedience among Kindred carries a stiff, often fatal, price. Proceed to scene three.

If the coterie decides to act, either to blame Harry or to save him (the coterie was in the same spot not long ago, after all), the scene proceeds to Harry's house, now besieged by several dozen angry townspeople, working themselves up to storm in.

What happens next is up to the coterie, below are some examples:

- If they are passive, the crowd eventually storms the house and beats Harry into a coma, as above. At this point the coterie can sneak up to Harry in the commotion and finish the job with a Manipulation + Stealth (Difficulty 3).
- If they try to rile up the crowd and make them kill Harry, use Charisma + Performance (Difficulty 3) or Manipulation + Performance (Difficulty 4), depending on whether the characters talk directly to the crowd or hide among them, playing along. At least two characters need to succeed to whip the crowd up enough to make them do the deed.

Many of them look quite distraught afterwards, not having counted on things going that far.
- If they want to talk the crowd into leaving, use the same pools, but one Difficulty higher since the crowd is far gone already.
- Sneaking into the house and getting Harry out the back requires a distraction - there are members of the crowd surrounding the house - likely Wits + Subterfuge (Difficulty 2, crowds are easy to manipulate), followed by Composure + Larceny (Difficulty 3) to get in. Harry needs little convincing to come along if the characters promise to help.
- Convincing Harry to show himself, yelling "gun!" and simply shooting him is Resolve + Subterfuge (Difficulty 3) followed by Composure + Firearms (Difficulty 2). Webber takes care of the rest.

Inventive coteries can probably come up with more ideas.

What if the coterie fights the mob?
That's just silly. Either they are overwhelmed or kill enough people to make the crowd flee, subsequently becoming America's most wanted, hunted by humans and vampires alike. However, causing a ruckus to make the crowd target them instead is a viable distractionary tactic.

Regardless of the outcome, a period of calm follows, before the wheels of the world grind on and scene three begins (at least one night later).

Scene Three: Fourth victim

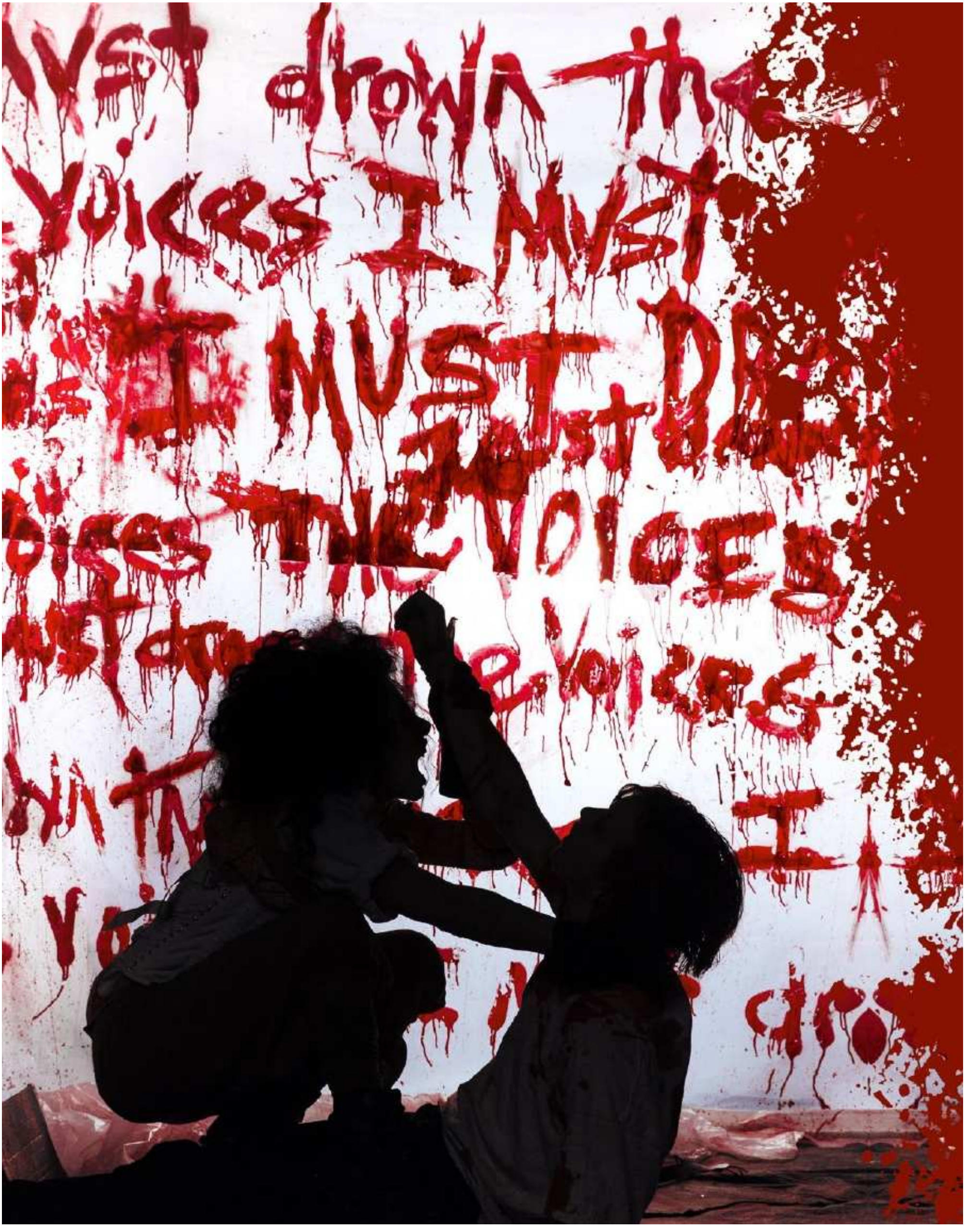
Scene four also starts with a call from Webber: a fourth victim has been found, and this time, there's no keeping the lid on. When the vampires were sleeping, a janitor stumbled upon the corpse of Mike Clark, male model and sex worker, in a suite at a nearby hotel. This time, the coterie is told that the murder scene is more elaborate and the police are all over it. Unfortunately, Webber himself hasn't got access.

This scene culminates with the "big reveal" of the scenario, leading to the flashback in chapter three. The main difficulty lies in getting access to the crime scene, which is cordoned off.

Options include but are not limited to:

- Sneaking in late at night. The police don't like to work late, and will post a couple of uniforms outside the suite to make sure the crime scene isn't tainted. Impersonating law enforcement is difficult but doable with Charisma + Subterfuge (Difficulty 5). Subduing the officers is also possible, but might raise questions later. Distracting them with e.g. a fire alarm could also work.
- Climbing in from the outside is quite difficult, as the window will have to be forced without the officers hearing anything, while simultaneously climbing (Dexterity + whatever is lower of Athletics and Larceny, Difficulty 5). Any subsequent investigation will also have to be quiet.
- The easiest solution is to call Sam and ask for her help. Less than an hour later, the characters have permission to investigate the scene.

As soon as they gain access, the characters realise that the scene is indeed more elaborate, in a way that provokes instant recognition. The body has been staged, and extensively savaged, but in an attempt to recreate something from the coterie's past rather than in rage. On the wall is a message that has baffled the police, but has great meaning to the coterie: "Four for Four". Chapter two ends immediately, as the coterie is catapulted into the past.


I must drown the
voices I must
but the voices
must drown me

Chapter 3 – Monsters we are

"The monsters were never
under my bed.
Because the monsters
were inside my head.

I fear no monsters,
for no monsters I see.
Because all this time
the monster has been me."
— Nikita Gill

This chapter is a flashback, and probably significantly shorter than the previous two. In it, the coterie learns who the real monsters are. Storytelling a flashback can be a bit tricky if the players don't play along and cooperate. Should they not, don't hesitate to take a break and talk about what you expect from a flashback scene. Otherwise, keep the scenes quick and crisp, cutting as soon as the central message of the scene has been shown.

The chronology of the scenes are broken, as trips down memory lane are wont to be. Therefore, make sure to set each scene carefully.

Start by handing the players the handout from the appendix and give them a moment to read the description and the cues for the first scene. If they happen to glance at the later scenes, no problem. As you begin scene two and three, give the players a moment to read their cues for that scene.

Rules in this Chapter

This chapter should ideally be run diceless. If the characters want to use Disciplines, remind them that it is thirty years ago, right after they became vampires, and they only have access to a single power: the first in their two-dot discipline (the free one).

Scene One: Innocence Lost

"Oh, no. It costs a lot more than your life. To murder innocent people?" says Peeta. "It costs everything you are."
— Suzanne Collins, Mockingjay

In this scene, the will-be coterie has to deal with the immediate aftermath of them having brutally slain and savaged a human being.

Set the scene in a multi-room hotel suite in the wee hours of the morning, with the players snapping to after the fog of Frenzy6, and finding themselves standing over the bloodied corpse of a person. They are covered in blood. Simply ask them: *"so, what are you going to do now?"*

Allow the players a few moments of roleplay, but just as they go into problem-solving mode, add fuel to the fire as a young party-goer flings the door to the suite open, yelling "coca deliveryyy!". As he takes in the carnage and braces to scream, he is likely not long for this world, and the vampires have claimed their second victim for the night.

Allow the players another few moments before you increase the pressure a third time, as another party-goer, perhaps a footballer, comes to in an adjoining room, asking what "all the hubbub is about". This time the coterie has a little more leeway, but don't make it easy for them.

As soon as the scene has progressed far enough and the characters are getting desperate (preferably with multiple people banging on the doors of the suite asking what is going on, multiple crises, all of them threatening catastrophe, etc.), cut to the next scene, which takes place an hour or so previously.

6 A state in which the vampires true nature, sometimes called "The Beast", comes to the fore, overriding the senses and making the vampire give in to its basest instincts

Scene Two: So Hungry

"Full bellies breed gentle manners. The pinch of famine makes monsters."
— Hilary Mantel, Bring Up the Bodies

In this scene, the coterie learns how scene one came to be, and the terrible price of denying the Beast. This scene should be description-heavy, and preferably contain less dialogue. Don't worry if the scene becomes choppy and surreal, the characters' memories of this period is foggy at best.

Set the scene in the lobby and adjoining restaurant of a large hotel, with a throng of people milling about. We're at the party of a large conference, and the mood is high. Everyone is getting lost in the throes of free booze, loud music and the company of their fellows. Everyone except the characters, who so far have refused to feed from humans but are increasingly debilitated by their Hunger. They have been set up at the hotel by a fellow Kindred (Sam), who wants to teach them the ropes of vampire existence.

Ask the players what their characters do in a setting such as this, and emphasize the constant dark impulses that assail them, especially so close to so many humans. After a while, cut to the suite, as the characters desperately seek to be among less people, afraid what they might do otherwise.

At the suite, give the players a moment to role-play their fear and loathing of their alien, monstrous nature. The humans there quickly leave, but at least one person remains (placed there by Sam, but this the characters do not know) suddenly walking in on the players, stating *"I'm here for you"*. The characters' visions turn blood red, and play cuts to scene three.

Scene Three: A bond is forged

"Murder is like potato chips: you can't stop with just one."
— Stephen King, Under the Dome

Scene three is calm, cool, and calculated. It takes place slightly after scene two, and is where the puzzle pieces finally fall into place, the connection with the present becoming evident. It is a dialogue-only scene.

Set the scene at the suite, well removed from the mess in the other rooms. With the players is Sam, who in exchange for future favors has agreed to help them. Address the players as Sam, and ask what they want to do about all this mess. She shoots down any suggestions to "call in cleaners" or anything of the like. Eventually, someone will come up with the idea to dress it as the work of a serial killer, and Sam agrees that this is a good idea. Depending on how many people the characters have killed so far, Sam will reply along the lines of "we might have to pad the statistics[7] a little bit to make it look believable later, but that's for another day". Let the characters discuss the details of this approach for a while, and this time, go full on problem-solving. End the scene, and the chapter, when someone mentions that they should leave a message from the killer: "Four for Four".

If the players seem not to understand that this is what bonds them into a coterie, what is alluded to in their character descriptions, and what places them under Sam's thumb, make sure these pieces fall into place.

NOTE: May sure you check in with all your players after this chapter, and perhaps take a short break, if play has been emotionally exhausting.

7 i.e. murder more people

Chapter 4 – What should we do with monsters?

Not at first, but... right there in the last instant. It's an unmistakable relief. See, cause they were afraid, and now they saw for the very first time how easy it was to just... let go. Yeah, they saw, in that last nanosecond, they saw... what they were. You, yourself, this whole big drama, it was never more than a jerry-rig of presumption and dumb will, and you could just let go. To finally know that you didn't have to hold on so tight. To realize that all your life - you know, all your love, all your hate, all your memories, all your pain - it was all the same thing. It was all the same dream, a dream that you had inside a locked room, a dream about being a person. And like a lot of dreams, there's a monster at the end of it.

-Nathan Cole, True Detective

This is the final chapter of the scenario, in which the coterie confronts the "monster" and perhaps themselves, making some hard decisions.

Rules in this Chapter

This chapter uses all the rules presented previously.

Scene one: What it is all about

Given that the coterie now knows that the killer is connected to their own previous deeds, they should be able to identify and track the murderer quite easily.

Set the scene wherever the players desire, some time after the events in chapter two. Looking into the identities of the victims of thirty years ago quickly reveals that one of them has a living relative who lives an hour's drive away, and who has been conducting a private investigation of the murders ever since.

This scene also gives the coterie the opportunity to tie off any other loose scenario ends, and could be a good opportunity for another encounter with Marcus Lector, for example.

The scene ends, unsurprisingly, when the coterie goes to confront the monster(s).

Scene two: Confrontation

In this scene, the coterie finally confronts the monster(s), confirming what they should already have guessed, and forcing them to decide how they want it all to end.

Set the scene on a rural property, with one large house. If they make themselves known, Martha invites them in. If they sneak up, Martha is in the living room, patiently awaiting the end.

Exactly how to play out this scene depends a little on what you expect the players to do, and how you think they want their climax. Basically, it boils down to three options:

Confrontation Climax

If the players seem keenest on exploring the morality of the scenario and don't mind a climax with very little action, Martha puts up no physical resistance. Instead, she tries to drive home and twist the knife of guilt and shame as much as possible. The coterie will have to decide what to do with Martha: Give her to the authorities and the needle, risking that the events from thirty years ago surface? Let her go, despite what she has done and the risk she poses? Kill her, while staring into the mirror?

Slasher Climax

If the players seem to want to either give Martha up to Lector, or kill her, but would feel cheated of an action-climax, you might arrange for a hate-and-desperation-

fuelled battle between them and Martha. In order to make a fight between an elderly human and four vampires interesting, bring forth the great equalizer: fire. As the coterie confronts Martha she sets the house on fire, which rapidly becomes a smoke and flame filled maze. Give Martha a combat pool of six dice and a health tracker of six. She fights with a meat-cleaver (+2 damage), and in order to attack her, characters need to first succeed on a Resolve + Awareness roll (Difficulty 4) to both locate her and steel themselves against the vampiric instinct to flee fire. They have -2 dice to defences from Martha's attacks, since she knows the warren that is her house intimately and is able to attack from surprising angles. All player characters additionally suffer one level of aggravated damage per turn from fire.

The coterie either flees the burning building with Martha's fate uncertain[8], succumbs to Martha and the flames, or kills Martha. A particularly poetic ending would have all the monsters perish in the fire.

Collector Climax

If it seems that the characters are not handing Martha to Lector and don't want to kill her outright, Marcus Lector comes to collect (even if they told him no previously). He gives them an opportunity to give Martha up voluntarily, then attacks.

Marcus himself has seven combat dice and a health tracker of eight. He also reduces all damage received by two because of his vampiric resilience. He fights with a sabre (+3 damage). His goons have six dice and health trackers of six, as well as body armor (convert up to four points of aggravated damage to superficial). They all use SMG:s (+2 damage).

Lector does not fight to the death, but retreats with a promise to return if Impaired (see above) or if he loses three or more people without any progress. It is also more important for him to get away with Martha than to destroy the characters.

8 She must have died in the fire. For sure.

Scene three: Conclusion

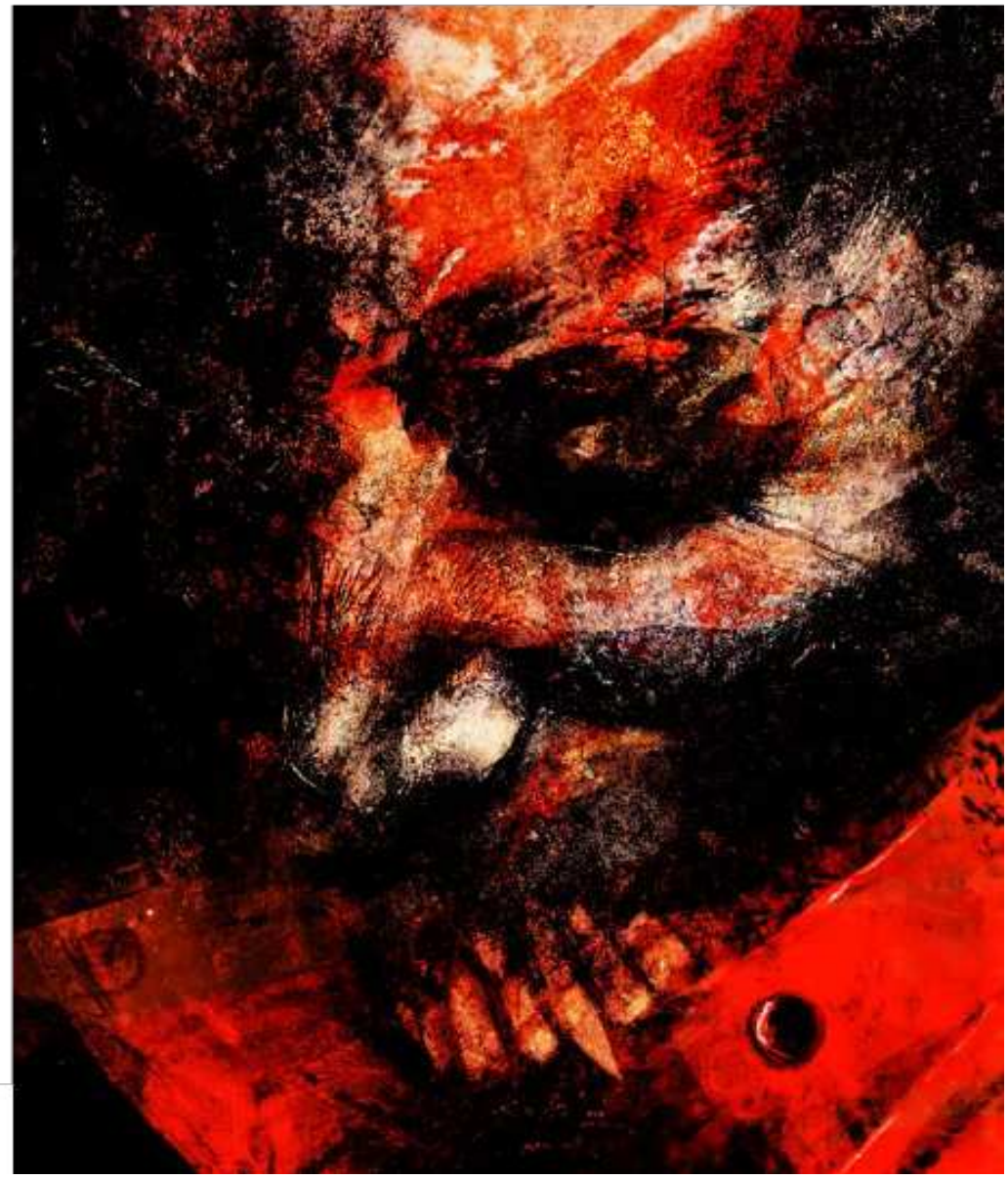
This scene is for tying up any loose ends, and describing what happens next, on a longer timescale. It need not be longer than a short description.

Depending on the conduct of the coterie they will either be lauded or chastised by Sam. In general, if they have caused more ruckus than the original murders (certainly a possibility for some player groups), Sam will be cross. If they have caused less, she will be satisfied, and if they have been smooth, she will even be nice.

Marcus is true to his word if they hand Martha over to him, and he now owes them. They'll have to live with the fact that he will most likely subject Martha to the most horrific treatment, as well as use her blood to dull his conscience when doing what he does.

Depending on what they did with Harry, he will either be dead, in a coma, or miserable.

Most significant, however, is how the player characters have been changed by the ordeal, see the epilogue below.



Epilogue

There are two epilogues for "The Monster(s)", based on whether the characters embraced their inner Beasts during the scenario, or if they managed to hold them at bay. Take a few moments as a group and discuss which ending you think the coterie deserves. Did the coterie express empathy with the murderer's victims in chapter one? Did they use their Disciplines to lord over others? Did they gladly accept Marcus Lector's offer? Did they express empathy with Harry? Did they butcher the posse in chapter two? Did they callously murder Harry? Did they seem perturbed by the revelations in chapter three? What did they do at the conclusion in chapter four? Does wanting to do good matter if the results are bad? Is it a mitigating circumstance that the penalty for disobedience for the coterie is very harsh?

Note: Vampire: the Masquerade has a Humanity system which regulates how deeply into a bestial state a character has degenerated. Since this quickstart is a stand-alone scenario, this system is abstracted here.

Humanity ending

Despite the many threats to it, the coterie has managed to hold on to their humanity for another day. Sooner or later, they will succumb - all vampires eventually do, but for now, there is a compromise between themselves and their Beasts.

Paul

Hmm... perhaps the story that you are in is more complicated than you thought? Can there be more than one protagonist? Perhaps life does continue for people that are no longer in your field of view? How deep does this rabbit-hole they call "the world" go, anyway? There must be patterns, yeees, patterns...

Charles

Doing the right thing is damn hard, that's for sure. It's like there is nothing completely black and white, but rather shades of grey, and you have to work all the time to see your path. Not you shouldn't try, of course. But one thing is certain: one day you are going to have to pay for every life you take.

Aileen

Sometimes, if you concentrate real hard, it is almost as if you could have it again, that spark. But... no. It was lost with your heartbeat. Doesn't mean you can't still inspire others, of course. Perhaps that is your fate: to be the eternal muse.

Juana

The world of animals is better than the world of humans. But no matter how much you want it, you are no animal. This curse of yours, it is something else, and you can see it clearer than most when you look into the mirror. The two worlds must be kept in check, in balance, or disaster strikes.

Beast ending

Through inaction, ineptitude or desire, the Beast has been left free to revel in the coterie's dark deeds, eroding their humanity and bringing them closer to that dark place where reason disappears entirely and the vampiric nature lords supreme.

Paul

You knew it! It was about you all along! It was your hand that turned the wheels of fate and brought it all into motion! You were the start, the middle and the end of it all! And now you know exactly how to shred all such doubt in the future, how to irrevocably place yourself in the spotlight. All you need is a blade... and patterns.

Charles

They are all sinners, all guilty. There is no black or white, only deep, sucking mud. You are in to your knees already, but this is good, you are right where you need to be. You are the cleaner, and the world is dirty. After all, it isn't you that's locked onto this earth with all of them, it is all of them locked onto this earth with you!

Aileen

You see it now. The answer was right there. It lies in the Clots - the special blood possessed by few, only accessible by the kill. But it can be cultivated, nurtured, infused into the blood with much work. All you need is a subject, and exclusive access. And motivation, of course, and pain, essential ingredients of creativity. Fortunately, you know exactly which buttons to push...

Juana

The world of humans must end. Alone, with the animals, you will finally find peace. There can be other vampires with you, of course, if they can subsist on animal blood. There will be others who see things your way. Like rats you must all gnaw upon the roots of the world, until it topples back to nature.

Appendix

Paul Clunie, the "protagonist"

Apparent age: early thirties
Embraced: late eighties

Whatever the story, you are its protagonist. All things happen for a reason, and that reason is you! You never question why, that's just the way it is. If, sometimes, other people do not see it that way, you must make them understand, show them the obvious signs and patterns that others miss, which clearly show your involvement in the plots around you.

In an earlier life, you were an analyst, looking at financial data and finding signs of malfeasance. Important work, for sure, but oh so boring. So you started inven... eh, seeing patterns, shaping patterns, molding patterns... and then, one day, along came a stranger and that was the start of a neverending story. And let's face it, stories are better at night anyway!

The coterie you run with are your sidekicks. They're the supporting cast, mainly there to highlight your presence in the story. You are loyal to them as they are loyal to you, through deed and purpose.

Relatior

CHARLES
You sometimes get the feeling that Charles doesn't... understand. He is your main man, the Sundance to your Butch, but sometimes, it's like he doesn't understand who's who. He seems to have no trouble letting go of the limelight, however, which suits you just fine.

AILEEN
Every story needs a leading lady, and she's it. Too bad she acts more like some sort of real artist than what you need: to make sure everyone understands your importance in the scheme of things. She really should put more effort into her role, and less into her art!

JUANA
If it wasn't for that occasion in your shared past, you'd spend very little time with this... thing. Once you made the mistake of looking beneath the rags, and what you saw was evidently best left alone. She does seem to care about you, but you care little for her affections.

Sense the unseen

The senses of the vampire become attuned to dimensions beyond the mundane, allowing them to sense presences otherwise hidden from the naked eye. This can be anything from another vampire using Obfuscate9 to someone using Auspex to spy upon the character to a ghost in the middle of the room.

■ **Cost:** Free

■ **Dice Pools:** Wits + Auspex or Resolve + Auspex

■ **System:** Whenever there's something supernatural hiding in plain sight, the Storyteller makes a hidden roll of Wits + Auspex against a Difficulty they choose. Against an entity actively trying to stay hidden, the Storyteller can call for a blind roll ("Lisa, roll seven dice for me") as a contest against the target's relevant pool. For example, detecting a vampire using Obfuscate would be a roll of Wits + Auspex vs Wits + Obfuscate. If the vampire actively searches for a hidden supernatural entity, they roll Resolve + Auspex similarly.

■ **Duration:** Passive

Premonition

The vampire experiences flashes of insight. These may take the form of raised hackles, sudden inspiration or even vivid visions. While never too precise, these visions can nudge the vampire out of harm's way or reveal a truth previously overlooked.

■ ■ **Cost:** Free or one Rouse Check

■ ■ **Dice Pools:** Resolve + Auspex

■ ■ **System:** Whenever the Storyteller deems it appropriate, this power gives the character a sudden hint that aids them in some way: letting them find a clue they've missed or saving them from danger. Whether it gives the character a sudden vision of themselves walking into a trap, throws an inviting red glow over the second right turn during a chase, or briefly flashes a skeleton beneath the floorboards in the Prince's office, this power always gives the Storyteller license to subtly speed up play or move the story onto a desired track.

■ ■ **The user can also actively provoke a premonition by focusing on a subject,** making a Rouse Check and rolling Resolve + Auspex. The number of successes determines the level of insight on the subject, if any.

■ ■ **Duration:** Passive

Cloud memory

By uttering the phrase "Forget!" the user can make the Dominated victim forget the current moment as well as the last few minutes, enough to mask a superficial feeding or a chance meeting. No new memories are formed and if pressed the victim realizes they have a few minutes missing.

■ ■ **Cost:** Free

■ ■ **Dice Pools:** Charisma + Dominate vs Wits + Resolve

■ ■ **System:** No roll is required against an unprepared mortal victim. Clouding the memory of a resisting victim or another vampire requires a Charisma + Dominate vs Wits + Resolve roll.

■ ■ **Duration:** Indefinitely

9 A vampire power that lets you stay unseen. It doesn't feature in this quickstart.